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RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 0021
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 3516
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 0694
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY PRIORITY 9329
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1297
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 7872
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 9914
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 5696
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 3357
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY 0651
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 003808

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TAGS: PK PREL PGOV KDEM
SUBJECT: SLIGHT GAINS FOR PML IN SENATE ELECTIONS

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 000072
¶B. PESHAWAR 00109

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Classified By: DCM Peter W. Bodde, DSCG 05-01,
January 2005, Edition 1, Reason: 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) In a follow-up to the January 2nd "retirement" of 50 Senators (reftel A), Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) in each of Pakistan's four provinces were charged with electing replacements on March 6. Each Provincial Assembly elected 11 Senators in a secret-ballot overseen by the Provincial Election Commission; Senators from the Islamabad Capital Territory (1) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (4) will be elected on March 10. The election saw the return of 20 Senators selected for retirement, as well as a slight gain of 5 seats for the ruling coalition (3 seats for the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and 2 for its coalition partner, the Muttahidda Quami Movement (MQM)). Among the opposition, the six-party Islamist alliance, the Muttahidda Majlis-e Ammal (MMA) won 10 seats (a loss of one from the previous election), the PPP won 5 (a loss of two seats), the middle-class Baloch National Party (NP) won its first seat, and the rest of the opposition picked up one seat each. Newly elected Senators will take the Oath of Office on Friday March ¶12.

WINNERS AND LOSERS: COALITION- 56, Opposition-39

¶2. (U) The following is a provincial breakdown of the outcome.

BALOCHISTAN (MMA loses one seat, NP gains a seat)

Ruling PML 5 (Jan Mohammad Khan Jamali, Mir Mohabbat Khan Marri, Saeed Ahmad Khan Hashmi, Rehana Yaya Baloch)

MMA 3 (Mohammad Ismail, Sabina Rauf, Rehmatullah Kakar)

NP 1 (Abdul Malik Baloch)

Opposition BNP-A 1 (Mir Isarullah Khan)

JWP 1 (Shahid Hussain Bugti)

PUNJAB: (PML gained two seats, PPP lost one seat)

Ruling PML 9 (Sardar Mohammad Khan Leghari, Syed Javed Ali Shah, Javed Ashraf Qazi (Minister of Education), Mohammad Ali Durrani, Naseem Chattha, S. M. Zafar, Haroon Khan, Gulshan Saeed, Nilofar Bakhtiyar (PM's Advisor on Womens' Development)

Opposition PML-N 1 (Mohamad Isaq Dar)
PPP 1 (Dr. Babar Awan)

SINDH (PPP loses one seat, MQM gains one seat)

Ruling PML 2 (Abdul Ghaffar Qureshi, Sameen Siddiqui
MQM 3 (Ahmed Ali, Col Syed Tahir Hussain Mashadi, Dr. Abdul Khaliq Pirzada)

PML-F 1 (Abdul Razak Thahim, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development)

Opposition PPP 4 (Raza Rabbani, Safdar Ali, Dr. Javaid Leghari, Ratna Bhagwandas)

MMA 1 (Khalid Mahmood Soomroo (JUI-F))

NWFP (MMA loses one seat)

Ruling MMA 6 (Professor Kurshid Ahmed, Mohammad Talha Mahmood, Maulana Gul Naseeb, Professor Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, Mohammad Azam Swati, Afia Zia)

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Opposition

PML 3 (Fauzia Fakheruz Zaman, Saleem Saifullah Khan, Ammar Ahmed Khan)

PPP-S 1 (Mohammad Ghufan Khan)
ANP 1 (Dr. Iliyas Bilour)

¶3. (C) Notably, there were few surprises among the winners and losers of the March 6th contest. Most parties had calculated ahead of time the number of seats they were likely to win, and awarded tickets accordingly. On the government side, the decision to dump Punjab Senators and Cabinet Members Shehzad Waseem and Dr. Hafiz Sheikh was made several weeks in advance. The same holds true for the PPPP decision to deny prominent party leader Dr. Abdullah Riar a ticket from Sindh. The GOP insisted the BNP-A deny troublesome Senator Mohim Khan Baloch a ticket as a condition of continued PML support to the party; his replacement is viewed as more pliable. As a condition of its MPAs' support to other nationalist parties, the NP insisted on support for one Senate Seat, a seat now held by former Provincial Education Minister Abdul Malik Baloch. The surprise defeats came on the PPP side: in NWFP, well-regarded Farhatullah Babar was unable to fend off a concerted PML campaign for his seat, while in Punjab, former World Bank official Dr. Akhbar Khwaja lost his technocrat seat to a PML challenger. Babar's defeat, however, marks the political rebirth of former PML Secretary General Salim Saifullah, who gained a seat.

¶4. (C) Comment. Embassy contacts in both the ruling and opposition parties, as well as several English language newspapers indicate that the March 6 Senate election can be judged fair. It was held by secret-ballot and monitored by officials from both the Provincial Election Commissions and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) who traveled to each Province from Islamabad. The campaign process, however, was marred by allegations of illegal activities, including vote-buying and promises of development resources to MPAs by

all sides. Overall, in the Embassy's judgement, the ruling coalition's slightly increased edge in the Senate will not have any significant policy or legislative impact. In the opposition, the PPP, however, may suffer in the medium-term from the loss of three of its more articulate, active members.

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